



P. H. May 1900.

*Snobson (to inhabitant of out-of-way seaside resort). "WHAT SORT OF PEOPLE DO YOU GET DOWN HERE IN THE SUMMER?"*

*Inhabitant. "OH, ALL SORTS, ZUR. THERE BE FINE PEOPLE AN' COMMON PEOPLE, AN' SOME JUST HALF-AN'-HALF, LIKE YOURSELF, ZUR."*

#### OVER EDUCATION.

[*"The Matrimonial School at Chicago has turned out an awful failure. A result of a visit to the school was, that both men and women looked for a higher standard in each other."* — *Westminster Gazette*.]

ONCE PENELOPE was kind,  
Gentle, loving and forgiving—  
She and I both of one mind;  
And in peace and concord living,  
Each the other's comfort sought,  
As a wife and husband ought.

But, in hopes to add thereby  
Sweeter syrup to our honey,  
We a course resolved to try  
At the School of Matrimony—  
Now each other's faults in turn  
Without pity we discern.

If you ask me what has stirred  
Thus fond love to bitter strife,  
'Tis the lectures that I heard  
On the "duties of a wife"—  
While PENELOPE, alas!  
Studied in the husband's class.

#### THE NEW SHOP.

THAT "khaki" is "the only wear"  
Of late has freely been asserted,  
Some dastards e'en to khaking care  
Behind the yeoman have adverted.

From "Kensingdorp" now slowly "trek"  
Up Ludgate "Kop" the wonted busses,  
While over "spruit" and "kloof" and  
"nek"

The military expert fusses.

The streams of talk have all one "drift,"  
A huntsman calls his double thong a  
"Sjambok," while jockeys try to lift  
Their mounts safe o'er the "open-  
donga."

When SIKES, who's pinched a watch and  
chain,

For theft once more has to appear, it  
Gives him unjust and needless pain—

He merely sought to "commandeer" it.

While boys cut up the good old plays,  
And mellow dramas term transpontine,  
With half-unconscious paraphrase  
The greybeards yarn of SADLER'S  
"Fontein."

Plain English words have even grown  
Obscured in Darkest-Afric dimness,  
For now a man of twenty stone,  
If 'cute, may prove his claim to "slim"-  
ness.

These thoughts, my Muse, have made us  
seek,

Although we are and must be shoppy,  
To gain if not Parnassus' Peak  
At any rate a little "kopje!"

#### MR. PUNCH'S MUSEUM.



#### THE HEAD OF A STAFF.

*Modern Egyptian Manufacture.*

[Presented to His Highness the Khedive.]



## HERO WORSHIP DEFUNCT.

Governess. "Now, IRENE, I CAN'T ALLOW YOU TO LOLL ABOUT LIKE THIS! DIDN'T I TELL YOU THAT THE GREAT NAPOLEON, ON ONE OCCASION, ALTHOUGH VERY ILL, SAT UPRIGHT ON HIS HORSE FOR FIFTEEN HOURS!"

Irene. "POOR LITTLE CHAP!"

## MANUEL DE LA CONVERSATION.

## EXPOSITION UNIVERSELLE.

CHER MONSIEUR.—Voici les premières pages de notre Manuel. Jusqu'ici tous les manuels ont eu un grand défaut; ils ont manqué d'actualité. On y trouvait des conversations dans la diligence ou sur un navire à voiles. Les auteurs aussi ne faisaient aucune attention au caractère de la nation. M. LUDWIG MÜLLER et moi nous avons changé tout cela. Les Anglais sont un peu insulaires, et il faut traduire les phrases dont ils se servent le plus souvent.

La partie anglaise est presque sans faute, car nous l'avons rédigée ensemble, en cherchant soigneusement l'orthographe de tous les mots. Dans la partie française il y a peut-être quelques erreurs. Je suis toujours souffrant après avoir été fort enrhumé, et par conséquent j'ai dicté toute cette partie à M. MÜLLER, qui écrit l'anglais étonnamment bien, mais le français avec beaucoup moins de facilité.

Agreez, &c.

AUGUSTE DE BASSOMPIERRE.

## THE PACKBOAT.

Is this that this boat is french or english? Est-ce que ce bateau est français ou anglais? One french boat, you say? Un bateau français, vous dites? Je le croyais. Quel boat!

One dye of cold. One stuff. On meurt de froid. On étouffe. What kitchen! Nothing that Quel cuisine! Rien que des of the french plates. Always plats français. Toujours des of the hashes. One has beautiful ragôts. On a beau demander

to demand of the boiled mutton, du mouton bouilli, du chou à of the cabbage to the water, of l'eau, du pudding de riz. Aucun the pudding of rice. Any plat anglais. english plate.

I not shall can nothing to eat. Je ne pourrai rien manger. I burst of hunger. Je crève de faim.

He go to rain. It is a veritable hurricane. What fog! Il va pleuvoir. C'est un véritable ouragan. Quel brouillard!

Never of the chance on one french boat. Jamais de la chance sur un bateau français.

The marines have they the stupid air! Les marins ont-ils l'air stupide!

What robber of buffoon opera that this captain! Quel bandit d'opéra bouffe que ce capitaine!

I not have caned to find of chair. Hast-one ever seed of the banks also bad-arranged? Je n'ai pu trouver de chaise. A-t-on jamais vu des bancs aussi mal-arrangés?

What current of air on the bridge! Quel courant d'air sur le pont!

He there has of the womans in the smoking. Il y a des femmes dans le fumeur.

The manners of the female French are abominables. Les mœurs des Françaises sont abominables.

The next time I shall attend one english boat. La prochaine fois j'attendrai un bateau anglais.

This here is one english boat? Celui-ci est un bateau anglais? You are sure of him? Vous en êtes sûr?

This is this that I have always sayed, the English are to the first rank as marines. C'est ce que j'ai toujours dit, les Anglais sont au premier rang comme marins.

What magnificent boat! So well installed! The cabins are superbs. All there is of one luxury! Quel magnifique bateau! Si bien installé! Les cabines sont superbes. Tout y est d'un luxe!

And the captain, what beautiful type of english marine! And all the equipage! Are they of braves peoples! Et le capitaine, quel beau type du marin anglais! Et tout l'équipage! Sont-ils de braves gens!

This wind of the sea is fortifying, that you do of the well, is it not? Ce vent de la mer est fortifiant, ça vous fait du bien, n'est-ce pas?

That the sea is calm, one should say one lake! Que la mer est calme, on dirait un lac!

From the moment that we us approach from the France he commence to fall from the rain. Du moment que nous nous approchons de la France il commence à tomber de la pluie.

Go us to put to the shelter. He there has two female English in the smoking, and I think that the one of shes go to smoke one cigarette. What delicious indiscretion! Go there! Allons nous mettre à l'abri. Il y a deux Anglaises dans le fumeur, et je crois que l'une d'elles va fumer une cigarette. Quelle délicieuse indiscretion! Allons-y!

Wish you to take something? Voulez-vous prendre quelque chose?

Boy! One glass beer. One scotsch. One lemon squashed. Garçon! Un bock. Un whisky. Un citron pressé.

As I you have sayed I prefer always one english boat. Comme je vous ai dit je préfère toujours un bateau anglais.

Roll, Britannia!

Roule, Britannia! H. D. B.

## LITERARY.

Reader. Rather severe notice upon JIMPKIN's latest work in this review.

Critic. Think so? I wrote it.

Reader. Did you? Do you know the book?

Critic. Not much, but I know the author.

## A FEW W-A-N-T-S.

(After a Recent Journalistic Model.)

WHAT the Nation wants is a serviceable A-R-M-Y of at least a million trained men.

AN A-R-M-Y equal to the tasks which are likely to be imposed upon it in the near future.

AN A-R-M-Y with a force behind it of half-a-million militia-men, enrolled by the application of the Ballot Act.

AN A-R-M-Y which will substitute the wholesome tonic of discipline for the irresponsible delights of street-loading and looking on at football matches.

Remember that

A-R-M-Y spells Army. You want an "Army." Insist upon having it. You may be offered something else which you don't want instead.

What the War Office wants is

A C-L-E-A-N S-W-E-E-P of Red Tape.

A C-L-E-A-N S-W-E-E-P of Old Fogeyism and Antiquated Methods.

A C-L-E-A-N S-W-E-E-P of its Contempt for, and Mis-handling of, the Volunteer Force.

A C-L-E-A-N S-W-E-E-P of the Genius in the Ordnance Department who is responsible for the defective sighting of the Lee-Enfield rifles supplied to the C.I.V.

Clean Sweep is spelt C-L-E-A-N S-W-E-E-P. Insist upon having it. You will most probably be offered something else which you don't want instead.

What Parliament wants is

A L-E-A-D-E-R who can rise above Opportunism, jocularly, and party evasion.

A L-E-A-D-E-R who can keep the Committee of National Defence up to its mark.

A L-E-A-D-E-R who knows a little better than the Man in the Street how to conduct the business of an Empire on Business Principles.

A L-E-A-D-E-R who can put an end to "the irritating and offensive chatter of the House of Commons." (See the Times, Feb. 1.)

A L-E-A-D-E-R who can lead.

Insist upon having him. You may be offered C-B., or something else that you don't want instead, but don't swap horses when crossing a stream. Better give the leader a good feed and plenty of whip, and then the rest of the team will pull through the Drift all right. A. A. S.

## PAGE FROM A CELESTIAL DIARY.

Monday.—Wrote to the Viceroy of Wongho to insist upon his declaring war with the French Demons. I will teach the bonnet women of Paris to introduce a colour that does not suit my complexion!

Tuesday.—Wired to the Governor of Bang Wang Woo to attack the Tsar. Hear



Riding Master. "I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU COULD RIDE!"  
Candidate for the Imperial Yeomanry. "YE-YES. BUT YOU DON'T GET 'ARF A CHANCE 'ERE, THE CORNERS ARE SO BLOOMIN' SHARP!"

that the Emperor of Russia inaugurated a Council of Peace. As if women could ever be at peace! A direct insult to the sex.

Wednesday.—Deposed my grandson and upset for the fifth time the Chinese Constitution.

Thursday.—Ordered everything foreign to be excluded from my dominions, with the exception of *poudre de roi*.

Friday.—Telephoned in all directions to proclaim war against the world. I will let them know what it is for an Empress to be in a bad temper!

Saturday.—Why don't I order the Viceroy of Wongho to be boiled in oil, the Governor of Bang Wang Woo to be cut into cubes, and my grandson to be con-

verted into human mince-meat? Why don't I do all this? The answer is simple enough. I feel that I am too much the Chinese lady!

## IN WAITING.

Germany.—For a great fleet.

France.—For a successful exhibition.

Russia.—For compensation in Persia.

Italy.—For a balanced budget.

Austria.—For Panslavonic harmony.

Turkey.—For the smallest contributions.

China.—For another Emperor.

America.—For good news from the old country.

John Bull.—For the war to be brought to a satisfactory conclusion.





### WATERING IT DOWN.

"AH! WHAT I LIKE ABOUT A BIT OF FISHING THIS TIME O' YEAR IS THE GLORIOUS APPETITE IT GIVES ONE FOR—ER—ONE'S LUNCH!"

### OUR BOOKING-OFFICE.

YET one more writer of note, Mr. A. E. W. MASON, has deserted the gradually dwindling ranks of those who have never collaborated with Mr. ANDREW LANG. *Parson Kelly* (LONGMANS) is, in the opinion of my Nautical Retainer, a very captivating Jacobite novel, full of entertainment and instruction. It would be rash to hazard an invidious distinction, but it looks as if the instruction had been provided by the Senior Partner. Perhaps the combination is responsible for a certain want of balance in the general scheme. The first two hundred pages of the delightful adventures of the Reverend Nonjuror and his soldier-of-fortune friend, Nick Wogan, cover a period of some three years, yet they are little more than a preface to the next two hundred, which deal with the events of just four-and-twenty hours. The great scene of the book, that of the rout at *Lady Oxford's*, is very cleverly designed, though the attitude of the ordinary guests towards the chief actors is faintly suggestive of an operatic chorus. On a point of detail there is too much dialogue and business between the first announcement of *Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's* name and her appearance at the door, unless the stairs were very steep and the lady scant of breath. Much more rapid was Mr. Nicholson Wogan's progress, presumably on horseback, from Corunna to Paris, by way of Avignon, "*which lay directly in his path!*" To this trifling tour he devoted "half a week or so of leisure." Mr. LANG must really collaborate in the next new atlas!

Another magnificent volume, making No. 3 of *The Anglo-Saxon Review*, edited by Lady RANDOLPH CHURCHILL, is just out. How her ladyship manages to be in the Transvaal as head of a Nursing Sisterhood and to edit this work, which is published by JOHN LANE in London and New York, puzzles the Baron.

However, so it is, and a very good specimen of the A.-S. R. it is. The photographic reproduction of pictures is excellent, that of NAPOLEON as a young lieutenant being admirable, and at the same time, the Baron would be inclined to think, uncommonly flattering. It was taken about 1798, and is supposed to be a living presentment of "the young Corsican" who had such grand ideas as to Egypt. On "The Binding of this Volume," Mr. CYRIL DAVENPORT's article is very interesting. Among the many well-considered and well-written contributions, H. DE VERE STACPOOLE's "The Outcasts" is most original in conception, though somewhat laboured and overcoloured in the word-painting. There is so much to be read and studied in this Review, that it is better for the Baron to refer his readers to the volume itself, whose contents will give them occupation for some considerable time.

In reading *The Backwater of Life* (SMITH, ELDER), my Baroness turns with feeling of relief from Mr. LESLIE STEPHEN's somewhat chilly biographical note about JAMES PAYN to the essays that form the volume. Mr. STEPHEN's constitutional literary manner may have been cunningly designed to accomplish the certain effect of contrast with that of the friend he really loved. With pen in hand he never gives himself away. PAYN spreads himself out on every page, flavours every sentence with something of his inner self, and, being of a beautiful nature, the charm is irresistible. The paper which gives its name to the collection of essays is perhaps one of the most beautiful, certainly one of the most pathetic, in the language. It tells how one who has been immersed in affairs, as it were in the mid-stream of what we call Life, finds himself in this backwater, "crippled and helpless, but still able to see through the osiers on the island between us what is passing along the river—the passenger vessels and the pleasure boats—and to hear faintly the voices and the laughter." Some of us who, in days already distant, have sat with this brave heart on Summer afternoons in the ground-floor room where he was imprisoned, read with sad interest all he was thinking about whilst we tried to talk.

*Marget at the Manse* (GARDNER, DARTON & Co.) is by ETHEL F. HEDDLE, whose *Haunted Town*, says one of my Retainers-in-chief, I still remember with the utmost pleasure. Her new book is a collection of delightful sketches of Scottish life and character. Miss HEDDLE has an exceptionally delicate and refined method of telling her stories, which deal with Pitcurlie, a fishing village on the east coast of Scotland. Dr. Gordon, the minister, and *Marget*, his housekeeper at the Manse, who is the heart of the book, are admirably-drawn characters. There is humour in these stories, and there is pathos, and both qualities are secured without the least strain.

In *Temple Bar* for this month there is an excellent article on "Parodies," by Mr. HERBERT M. SANDERS, with whom the Baron is delighted to find himself, not inexperienced in such matters, in perfect accord, except as to the old-world parodies *Tom Thumb* and *Chrononhotonthologos*, which at the present day are hopeless for acting and dull for reading. THE B. DE B.-W.

### SOMETHING IN A NAME.

*Brown* (throwing down paper in disgust). Why the dickens don't these Boers give some sensible names to their towns, such as Brixton, Hampstead, or Peckham Rye?

AN ABSENT-MINDED BEGGAR.—No; we have not heard confirmation of the rumour to which you allude, that the member for the Scotland Division of Liverpool desires now to be known as TAY PAY, PAY, PAY. We can have enough even of a good thing, and we already have that in TAY PAY.

AN EXPERT'S OPINION.—In his speech at Birmingham defending Ministerial conduct of the war, Mr. JESSE COLLINGS emphatically declared there had been "no muddle." There are few men in public life qualified to speak with higher authority on the topic.





**THE INNOCENT ABROAD.**

*Imperial Russian Frontier Official (inspecting passport). "ON DIPLOMATIC BUSINESS!"*  
*Dr. Leyds. "OH, NO! MERELY TRAVELLING FOR PLEASURE."*



### ON THE GOLF LINKS—THE RETORT COURTEOUS.

*The Major-General (waiting to drive, to girl carrying baby, who blocks the way). "NOW THEN, HURRY ON PLEASE WITH THAT BABY." Girl. "GARN! BABY YERSELF, PLAYING AT BALL THERE IN YOUR KNICKERBOCKERS AN' ALL!"*

#### DRAMA WITH A PURPOSE.

MY DEAR MR. PUNCH,

It has not, of course, escaped your eagle eye that Mr. HENRY AUTHOR JONES, acting as chairman at The Playgoers' Club dinner last Sunday week, and speaking as a Dramatist, observed, "We must educate our master, the Public, to perceive the distinction between dramatic art and popular amusement." To which, as one of the public, I reply to Mr. HENRY AUTHOR JONES,—Sir, we go to Church, we who are Church-goers, or to cognate places of worship, where qualified preachers give us religious instruction; we go to lecture-rooms, museums, libraries, and so forth, for the acquisition of secular knowledge of various kinds; to offices, law courts, markets, and a hundred other places, for business; and, work being over for the day, we go to the theatre for relaxation, i.e., for amusement. If a performance at a theatre does not succeed in distracting us from our ordinary cares and worries, then such performance has failed in its primary object. If thus failing to amuse, it attempts to instruct, then the theatre no longer offends negatively, but has constituted itself a nuisance, a head-ache-giving, wearisome nuisance, and the theatre-goer, with respect to such performance, will be a theatre-abstainer. Imagine an Instructive Opera with mathematical songs, historical duets, moral quartets, and geographical choruses! "The tag," when not apologetic, was supposed to point a moral: but this has been for many years suppressed as superfluous. Let it be the object of every dramatist to interest and amuse, and let the deduction of a moral be left to the conscience of the spectator. ONE OF THE SMITH FAMILY.

#### WAR "NEWS."

(Of which some people are getting a little tired.)

THAT "President STEYN is said to be much depressed."

THAT "President STEYN visited the Boer trenches and addressed the Free State Commandos. The President is stated to be in high spirits at the enthusiasm displayed by the men."

THAT "the Free Staters are heartily tired of the war."

THAT "the Boers are running very short of supplies and ammunition, and must soon abandon the campaign."

THAT "the Boers are stated upon good authority"—(the office boy)—"to have ammunition and stores for at least two years."

THAT "Dr. LEYDS has been horsewhipped by an Englishman." (The inevitable contradiction is in this case peculiarly disappointing.)

THAT "the Boers fully expect that after the war KRÜGER will be crowned at Westminster."

THAT "President STEYN has removed his furniture to Pretoria." (Presumably to succeed KRÜGER, promoted. See last item of news.)

THAT "the Boer losses in the war up-to-date are computed"—(also by the office boy)—to amount to —" (or any other imaginary figure whatsoever).

THAT "President KRÜGER, in reply to congratulations on Boer successes, is reported to have quoted Psalm —" (or any other Biblical quotation whatsoever).

THAT "Sir E. A—D B—T is said to have expressed warm approval"—(or disapproval)—"of General —'s tactics." (And similar thrilling announcements.)

## SOBER SCOTS.

["The 'Sober Scot Society' has just been formed in Edinburgh. Its members bind themselves not to drink liquor before noon."—*Daily Paper*.]

WILLIE brewed a peck o' maut,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
TAMMAS cam' a-findin' faut,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
"What's this poison ye wad pree?  
Pat awa' the barley-bree!  
Be a Sober Scot like me!"  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!

WILLIE gied a fearsome frown,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
Looked as he wad knock him doun,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
"Shober? Dinna gie me sic  
Insults! Gin I'm speakin' thick  
Lemme gang tae Jerich—hie!"  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!

TAM turned up a yellow ee,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
"Man, ye're fou as fou can be;"  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
"Weel, an', laddie, gin I am,  
Div ye think I care a—TAM!  
I am nae teetotal lamb!"  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!

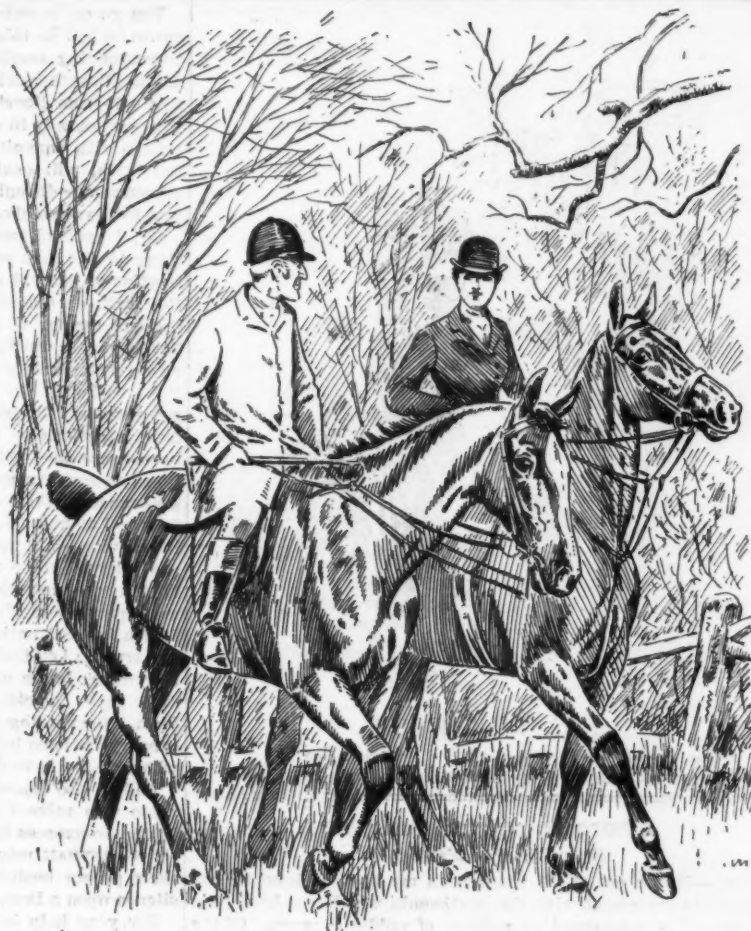
"Haud yer havers! Wha's T. T.?  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
What! A Sober Scot like me?  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
I, my lad, like ither men,  
Lo'e a drappie noo and then;  
I am free at noon, ye ken."  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!

Hoo it cam' let wise men tell,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
While they cracked the clock struck twal',  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't!  
WILL filled up a glass an', faith,  
TAMMAS took it, naethin' laith,  
Noo they're fou an' canty baith,  
Ha, ha, the brewin' o't.

## THE SARDINE-BOX RAILWAY.

DEAR MR. PUNCH,—As your columns are, I know, always open to stories of thrilling adventures by land or sea, I venture to send you a short account of a journey which I made on Tuesday last by the Sardine-Box Railway, running from the Monument in the City to the hamlet of Stockwell. By the way, fancy "running from the Monument!" as if that "tall bully" could run after anybody or anything! But to continue. On arrival at the station, in company with several hundreds of *voyageurs*, we were merely requested to hand over twopence apiece to an official, who had no further trouble but to pass us, like lambs, through a turnstile.

After some fine healthy scrimmages, which showed that many of the voyagers had not forgotten the old Rugby tactics of the Richmond and Blackheath football grounds,



## A GEOGRAPHICAL DIFFICULTY.

"YOUR SON HAS GONE OUT, HASN'T HE, JONES?"

"YES, MISS. I SEE FROM THE NEWSPAPER HIS REGIMENT IS IN KHAKE; BUT I CAN'T FIND IT ON THE MAP. MAYBE YOU'VE HEARD TELL OF THE PLACE?"

we managed in driblets to reach an iron cage, which descended rapidly and deposited us alongside a platform, the birds inside the cage, closed by gates, which by a skilful manoeuvre on the part of those in authority were opened on both sides of the station just as an unloaded train entered the station. Then after a cheerful hand-to-hand struggle the strongest or perhaps the craftiest of the combatants managed to enter the sardine-boxes.

Directly we started the electric lights, which are supposed to illumine the sardine-boxes, dimmed to an opalescent red, the

boxes themselves swayed from side to side like colliers in a chopping sea (personally I am very fond of a choppy sea), and very speedily I arrived, just as if I had awoke from a strange dream, at Stockwell.

The Sardine-Box Company advertises its line as the "warmest" in London. I can cordially endorse this statement. Trusting that the adventurous spirit of other explorers will be encouraged by my experiences,

I am your obedient servant,

PEREGRINE PINCHER.

Angel Court, E.C.





### WAR IN EARNEST.

"THE BOERS 'LL COP IT NOW!" "WOT'S UP?"  
 "FARFER'S GONE TO SOUF AFRICA, AN' TOOKEN 'IS STRAP!"

### A NOTE TO MR. ALFRED AUSTIN.

(From Mr. Punch's Vagrant.)

SIR,—It has not at all times been my good fortune to find myself in agreement with the sentiments which you have from time to time expressed on matters of public concern. Of the difference between us, as, indeed, of my existence, you have in all probability been unconscious. To those serene and lofty peaks on which you commune with Apollo and the Muses no rumour of any jarring difference between yourself and me has, I suppose, found its way. No matter. I know what I have done and am content to bear the responsibility for my action. All the more necessary is it that I should assure you of my sympathy and good will, however little you may value this expression of feeling on my part, when I find you declaring in the language of true patriotism what I conceive to be the right view of at least one phase of our present troubles.

In the *Times* of February 1 there appears under the title "*Imperium et Libertas*," a letter, signed by you, which to my mind outweighs all the piled stanzas of the poets, and all the loaded columns of the leader-writers devoted to the same subject. The language in which you state your opinions may not, perhaps, immediately convey your undoubted meaning to our latest arbiter, the Man in the Street. But in the ear of reason and good sense no doubt can exist. You desire, you say, "to deprecate the tendency, of which no one can have failed to observe several symptoms of late, to persuade the British people to distrust, if not to disbelieve in, the political liberty they have so long practised, and of which hitherto they have shown themselves so proud, and even to listen to certain Continental foxes, who, in the language of the old fable, having lost their own tails, or perhaps had the misfortune to be born without any, are self-complacently suggesting that we should get rid of our own."

You go on to extol liberty, which, as you rightly declare, is not to be had in this complex and jarring world without some corresponding sacrifice; and you beg your fellow-countrymen not to allow themselves to be dislodged from their faith that this self-same liberty, with its necessary accompaniment, the courage not only to speak and hear the truth, but likewise to endure with equanimity the propagation of that which is not the truth, will enable us with due patience and energy to overcome our difficulties—together with much else that is well said to the same effect.

Sir, I applaud your courage. It might seem to be a small thing to ask that your fellow-countrymen should, without distinction of party, have liberty to express what they hold to be the truth on questions of grave public concern. But in the present temper of able and distinguished men, speaking in Parliament or writing in the newspapers, such a request shows no common measure of public spirit and right feeling. We are to be baffled in our inquiries because, forsooth, "the time has not yet come for inquiry and criticism." No comments on the fatuous actions or speeches of Ministers are to be allowed because we must not weaken the Government by showing that its members have more than justified their human nature by a pronounced liability to error. Mistakes are to be concealed, folly and rashness and presumptuous ignorance are to be buried in oblivion—in a word, truth, the truth for which you and I and all who value the honour of their country ask, is to be hidden away in order that men in high place may escape the consequences of what they have done and may continue to mislead a blinded nation. For Heaven's sake, I say, let us have the truth. Let there be no more concealments of letters and telegrams; let an end be made of mystery and appeals to the *chose jugée*. Facts, we know, are hard things and winna ding. We ask for nothing but facts. The humiliation into which our country has been led is evident. Let us know why and through whom we are in so deplorable a situation.

And in the meantime, until these facts are discovered, let those who value their country and their birthright have the liberty to express their honest opinions, even though Mr. Justice GRANTHAM may divert the attention of a grand jury from their proper business to his own misguided effort to impose silence upon a Dean.

For your help in this direction the thanks of all who love liberty are due to you.

I am, Sir, yours with great respect,

THE VAGRANT.

### LITTLE ENGLANDER.

["I have been called a Little Englander."—John Morley.]

I 'm called Little Englander—poor Little Englander,  
 Though I could never tell why,  
 Still I 'm called Little Englander—mad Little Englander,  
 Bad Little Englander I!

When Jingoes are scheming, and JOSEPH is dreaming  
 Of painting the universe red,  
 I wonder if others, say, Mr. STRAD's brothers,  
 Prefer their own colour instead.

I hate guns and rifles, but there are some trifles  
 To which some attention I 'd give,  
 For instance, those pensions which JOE never mentions,  
 And room for the people to live.

Then if Little Englanders, poor Little Englanders,  
 Think of home duties and try  
 To better the nation by wise legislation,  
 Why then Little Englander I!

SUGGESTION for an advertisement as simple as effective for SELL's most useful Dictionary of the World's Press.—"Buy SELL."



A POSER.

The eldest Miss Elderby (to Jones, who has been mentioning his desire to get lady friends to sit to him in evening dress ("Ordinary models are so commonplace, doncher know"), having in his mind the piquant younger sister). "BUT THERE NEED BE NO DIFFICULTY ABOUT THAT, MR. JONES, SURELY. I WILL SIT TO YOU AT ANY TIME, WITH PLEASURE!"

## MASTERPIECES MODERNISED.

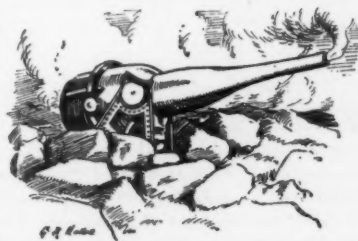
## IV.—PRIDE AND PREJUDICE.

(Revised by R. S. H-CH-NS. Author of "The Slave," etc.)

It was the evening of the Netherfield ball. The majority of the male guests had carefully woven inverted commonplaces into embroidered epigrams. However, they looked pretty enough at a distance: the truisms of life alone bear close scrutiny. Mrs. BENNETT was in her element: in searching for eligible *partis*, her fondness for high game was as well

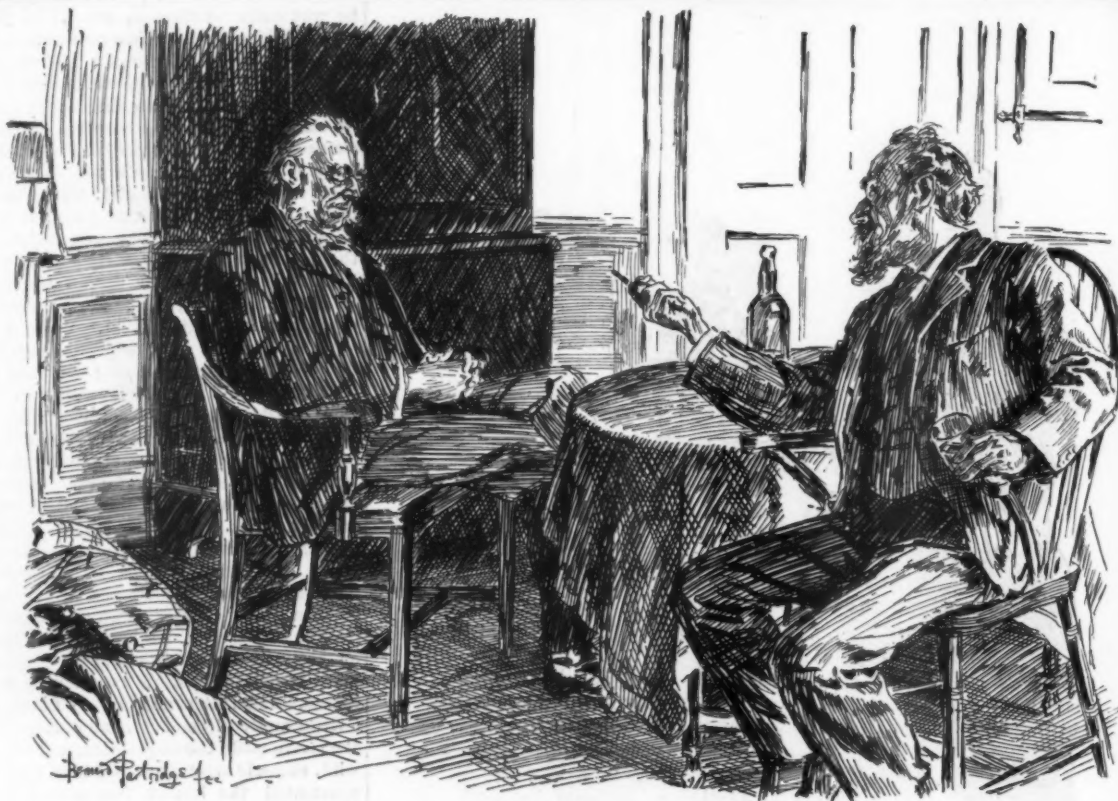
known as her partiality for low dress. Her appearance bespoke a massive impropriety; but she was, in reality, hopelessly respectable. Rumour had even hinted that she and her husband were vulgar enough to "make it up" after a quarrel. His adherence to domestic virtues had long since placed him beyond the pale of social toleration. A man who loved his home was clearly capable of any crime. As evening wore on, the brilliant paradoxes flagged. One youth had been so overcome in concocting a *bon mot* during the Barn dance, that for the next half hour

he was quite unaffected, greatly to the alarm of his friends. Two men were conversing earnestly at the far end of the ball-room. "The flow of wit is ebbing," muttered DARCY, raising his shaggy eyebrows. "Wit cannot survive lobster mayonnaise," replied BINGLEY. "But hang it, man, why aren't you dancing? Look at that charming girl, Miss ELIZABETH BENNETT!" Both men gazed in the direction of the girl. She was watching the entrance door: her eyes glittered brightly, and upon her parted red lips trembled the faint, mysterious moisture of some secret expectation. "Can you read her face?" said DARCY, hoarsely. "She's dreaming of supper: her soul is communing with the spirit of GUNTER'S. You thought it idealism—wait!" "Better cut in with your show now," said BINGLEY coldly. "The supper interval affords opportunity for your mystic *séance*." DARCY stepped forward. "Ladies and gentlemen," he said, "please attend!" Whilst speaking he kept his eye upon ELIZABETH BENNETT, who, at first resentful, was gradually fascinated by his odd demeanour. "I have," continued DARCY, with a nondescript foreign accent, such as popular Illusionists affect, "spent many years in Eastern travel with the famous CHARLIZ BERTRAMÜZ . . . BINGLEY, a little music please . . . and during this time have made the acquaintance of many wild, esoteric mysteries. Of late, I have penetrated the inmost recesses of the Mystic Hall of Egypt, where the High Pontiff offered me many shekels of gold, could I but fathom his rites!" Whilst speaking, DARCY turned up his cuffs with a graceful, sinuous movement. Then he advanced towards ELIZABETH BENNETT and dexterously produced a *pâté de fole gras* from the flowers at her bosom. "Near your heart, Madam," said DARCY, looking hard at her. Meanwhile, BINGLEY had merged from "The Rose of Persia" into a modern *chansonette* by that virtuoso CHEVALIER, where the beguiling effect upon the organ of sight exercised by manual celerity is touchingly described. "What with drawing-room *diablerie* and epigram-mania," said DARCY, producing a rabbit from Mrs. BENNETT's fan, "we will make an impression in the neighbourhood." A. R.



"JOE CHAMBERLAIN"—THE BIG GUN.

(As he is depicted in the Boer nurseries.)



## A DISAPPOINTING HOST.

*Sandy.* "A 'M TELLT YR HEV A NEW NEBBUR, DONAL'." *Donald.* "AYE." *Sandy.* "AN' WHAT LIKE IS HE?"  
*Donald.* "WEEL, HE'S A CURIOUS LADDIE. A WENT TO HEV A BIT TALK WI' HIM TH' IITHER EVENIN', AN' HE OFFERED ME A GLASS O' WHUSKEY, D'YE SEE! WEEL, HE WAS POORIN' IT OOT, AN' A SAID TO HIM 'STOP!'—AN' HE STOPPIT! THAT'S THE SOORT O' MON HE IS."

## THE BOOK OF BEAUTY.

A GREAT THOUGHT FOR EVERY DAY IN THE YEAR.

## III.—THE L-BB-CK SECTION.

(For February.)

1ST.—Originality is the mark of genius; but a love of commonplace, or "a firm grasp of the obvious," may be acquired by the humblest among us.

2ND.—Poverty is not necessarily shameful. It was once remarked of a great man that "he came of poor but honest parents." As BURNS so beautifully said: "For a' that and a' that!"

3RD.—Childhood, both in man and beast, is the period of innocence. Of Mary's "little lamb" it was said that "its fleece was white as snow."

4TH.—How interesting is the present century! A hundred years ago there were fewer books. The population has also increased.

5TH.—It is best not to follow two points of the compass at the same time. The pilot that steers both for Scylla and Charybdis is in danger of missing them both (HOMER).

6TH.—A man's work will often outlive him. Thus, SHAKESPEARE and WATT are dead; but *Hamlet* and the steam-engine survive.

7TH.—It is generally recognised that in great danger you may show presence of mind, even though you are absent in body.

Some of our best military criticisms are produced in Fleet Street.

8TH.—Botany brings us into relationship with flowers. Many people consider that the study of Nature is best pursued in the open air. This view applies also to hunting, shooting and fishing.

9TH.—Water is recognised as a necessity to ships. What should we do if anything went wrong with the ocean? Suppose "the deep did rot!" (COLERIDGE).

10TH.—Pleasure fades like a fresh herring; but the salt of virtue may turn it into an enduring bloater.

11TH.—In Art it is not enough to copy Nature: the Ideal should come from within. That is why models are so unimportant. There was once a great painter who always had the hangman to sit for his pictures of Venus.

12TH.—The power of Music is proverbial. It "soothes the savage breast" (CONGREVE), including snakes. It was CLEOPATRA who said, "Give me some music;" on which her attendant remarked as follows: "The music, ho!" Both these last passages may be found in SHAKESPEARE.

13TH.—"Home, sweet home!" I forget who said this.

14TH (*St. Valentine's Day*).—It would be difficult to name a single truly great poet who has not, at one time or another, referred to Love. It is Love that gives pinions even to the caterpillar. But we must beware of Sirens (HOMER). O. S.

(To be continued.)





“LEAST SAID SOONEST MENDED.”

MASTER CAMPBELL-BANNERMAN. “PLEASE, SIR, I KNOW WHO DID IT.”

DR. BULL (*severely*). “NEVER MIND WHO DID IT. GET TO WORK AND WIPE IT OFF BETWEEN YOU.”



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## ESSENCE OF PARLIAMENT.

EXTRACTED FROM THE DIARY OF TOBY, M.P.

House of Commons, Tuesday, January 30.  
—House deeply grateful to DICKENSON,  
new member for Wells. Met to-day for



A MISINTERPRETED GESTURE.

Unexpectedly warm reception for a new member from Mr. Milman, the new Chief Clerk at the Table.

opening Session under a cloud, the like of which has not loured over the Empire since days of Indian Mutiny. Like the nation at large, its representatives at Westminster not disposed to go about whining. Still, disappointment and sorrow weigh down the heart. Welcome the man who shall lift the load, even for a moment.

Behold the man in DICKENSON, just emerged from the Wells of Somerset. Called to Table to take the oath, he advanced with jaunty step, staying here and there to make obeisance to the Chair. Arrived at the Table, he found standing at corner a gentleman the benevolence of whose visage no wig can hide. As the new member came within hail, the figure in wig and gown held forth a generously opened right hand.

"How nice," thought DICKENSON OF

WELLS. "How friendly! Don't know the gentleman, but he is evidently some one in high official position sent out, probably by the SPEAKER himself, to welcome me."

For a moment there flashed over new member's mind the idea that a little music might be suitable to the occasion. A well-known duet seemed specially written for it. Suppose the gentleman in wig and gown (who looked as if he had a baritone voice) were to begin, "Who goes there?" Then the new member, in fine tenor, would follow with "A friend; all's WELLS."

Perhaps, on the whole, that would be unusual. At present gentleman in wig and gown did not seem disposed to do more than shake hands. DICKENSON OF WELLS cordially responded, reaching forth his fist with friendliest gesture.

In ordinary time Mr. MILMAN (for it was he who stood in wig and gown) might have entered into the spirit of the joke, shaken hands with the new member and asked after his wife and family. But a crisis broods over the Table of the House. Sir REGINALD PALGRAVE, after serving through eleven Parliaments, finds he really cannot stand the prospect of a twelfth. About to retire; there will be vacancy in the Chair of the Chief Clerk; Mr. MILMAN of course expected to fill it. Must live up to dignity of position.

Accordingly, when DICKENSON OF WELLS held out his hand, humming the air of his part in the cheerful duet, the Clerk hastily withdrew his, and by sharp gesture secured delivery of the Return to the Writ, which he must hold in possession before administering the oath.

A trifling incident, but members gratefully laughed. New member for Wells, having signed Roll of Parliament, with drew into obscurity, conscious he had made a favourable first impression.

Business done.—Address moved. In the Lords the MARKISS explained everything in answer to accusation of maladministration by Her Majesty's Government. It was all the British Constitution. If not

quite all, then there was the Treasury. Finally the MARKISS, looking across Table threateningly at KIMBERLEY, observed, "You can't see through a brick wall." That clinched the matter. Noble Lords felt there was nothing more to be said. Debate over, Address agreed to, conduct of the war by the Government thereby approved, all within the space of two hours.

House of Lords, Thursday.—How fitful is life! How brief its triumphs! How certain its shadows! On Tuesday the MARKISS went home soothed by consciousness of a great success. When House met for new Session, even a Government with majority of over a hundred seemed in a shaky state. In South Africa matters had muddled along with reiterated disaster, relieved only by the bravery of the British soldier. At critical moments, the work of

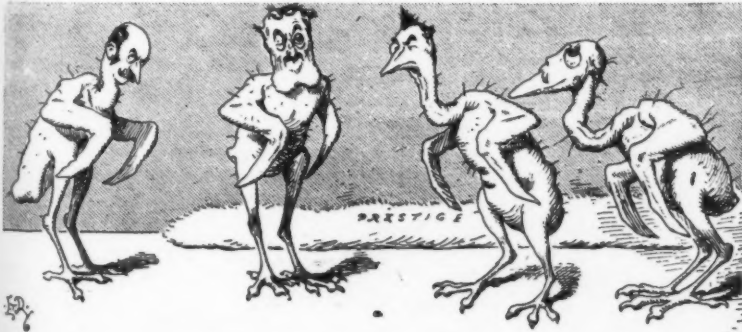


THE INCORRIGIBLE AND UNTIMELY JESTER.

"I venture to think that the country will have to be inspired by a loftier tone and a truer patriotism than we have heard from the Prime Minister to-night."—Lord Rosebery in the Lords.

the home administration being tried, was invariably found wanting. There were ominous references to the Crimean War, suggestions of reappointment of its famous Committee of Enquiry. Mutiny broke out in the Ministerial Press. Would the oft-tried fealty of the majority, even in the House of Lords, stand by a discredited Ministry?

The MARKISS faced the gathering foe with characteristic courage. There flashed upon him that brilliant idea of laying the blame on the British Constitution. The B. C. could make no retort; the splendid audacity of the suggestion surprised ordinary critics into silence. If



A REAL BRITISH PLUCK; OR, "WE'VE HAD A DEUCE OF A TIME!"

"He," Mr. Wyndham, "would not be a party to taking off one feather's weight of the responsibility of the Cabinet."





### "A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE," &c.

*Monsieur (to Marquis).* "HÉ BIEN, MON CHER! WHAT CHANCE! HOW MANY BRACES HAVE YOU TO YOUR BAGS?"

only he had stopped there all would have been well. In an evil moment for himself the MARKISS, descending from magnificent generalities, touched sordid particulars. As if the British Constitution was not big enough and nebulous enough to cover everything, he laid the blame of inadequate preparation for war at the door of the Treasury.

Mighty hubbub followed. ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS, after private rehearsal of contradiction in his own office, seized opportunity in House of publicly refuting imputation of the MARKISS. The two ways of putting same thing differed in con-

struction and choice of language; but though unequal in verbal emphasis, they were uniformly effective. Worse still, the Permanent Secretary, taking the affront to himself, talked of resignation. Never saw the MARKISS so genuinely surprised, so deeply pained.

"Can't understand it, TOBY," he said, when I tried to comfort him with assurance that the affair would blow over, as others had done. "Most vexatious of people insisting on thinking I mean exactly what I say."

Something had to be done to counteract the influence of the fat in the fire. Accordingly, when House met this afternoon, the MARKISS appeared at the Table and explained that when on Tuesday he had traced national disaster to the action of the Treasury, supplementary to the malign influence of the British Constitution, and to human inability to see through a brick wall, he had not had in his mind either the Chancellor of the Exchequer or the Permanent Secretary. He was going on to say that he suspected the office-boy, but, warned by recent experience, and careful to avoid fresh complications, he pulled up short.

*Business done.*—Debate on Address continued in Commons.

*House of Commons, Friday.*—EVELYN CECIL happily spared from being shut up in Ladysmith, so that he might bring home a rare flower of speech to entwine in the chaplet of debate on the Address. Speaking of the embarrassment that besets the Ministry, he besought the House to be tender with their shortcomings, since at a particular crisis "they were crucified on the horns of a dilemma." The position indicated implies some physical difficulties; the imagery is grand.

REDMOND cadet not to be behind a bloated aristocracy. Ran the Premier's nephew pretty close in prize-bull yard. SAUNDERSON speaking just now observed in his genial manner that Irish Nationalists never attack in front, always in the rear. Instantly Irish camp in commotion. Accustomed to pour contumely and scorn on others, properly indignant if stream turned on them, even by a fellow-countryman. Amid roar of remonstrance stentorian voice of REDMOND cadet heard observing more in sorrow than in anger, "If I had said anything of the kind I would not have been permitted."

*Business done.*—More about mismanagement by the best of all Ministries.

**HOW TO OBTAIN AN INCOME.**—By marrying Miss ANN DOLLARY, the million-heiress. You will then have ten "thou." per ann.

**FIELD RATIONS.**—The only known equivalent to bully beef. Cow-hard.



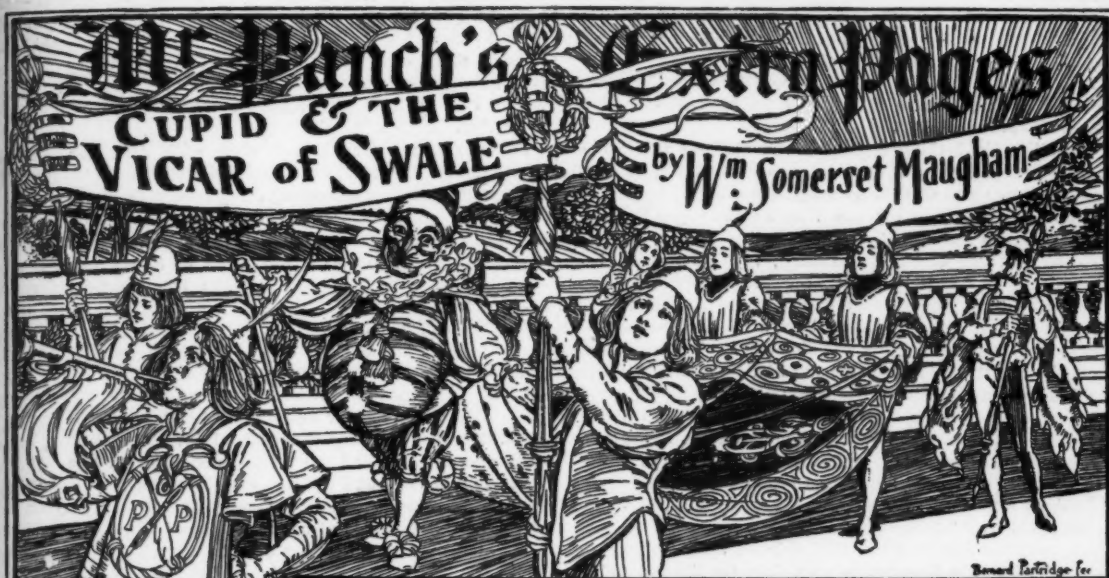
[“The work of the ‘boy-washerwomen’ at the Church Army Boys’ Home has proved very satisfactory.”—*Daily Paper.*]

BUT WON'T THE REAL WASHERWOMEN RESENT THIS INTRUSION INTO THEIR RANKS? IT MAY CAUSE A STRIKE, AND WHAT COULD A POOR LITTLE “BOY-WASHERWOMAN” DO WITH SUCH PICKETS AS ABOVE!









**S**WALE is a place of many advantages. It is strikingly picturesque and eminently respectable; the people who live in it

excite the admiration of the world in general, not only by their affluence, but by their gentility also, and in these degenerate days the one does not always accompany the other. They inhabit mansions overgrown with creepers, and they all keep a carriage. Here and there a few poor people live in artistic cottages for the special conveniences of the young ladies, who paint in water-colours. But the poor people, even, are of the nicest class, the class that looks so pleasant in Academy pictures. Alas! it is a type that is fast disappearing in England. Now the labourer is an independent creature with no feelings of gratitude; he does not touch his hat to the Parson, and his wife drops no curtsy to the Squire; he is full of new-fangled Radical notions, and neither looks nice in pictures nor in reality. He has become distinctly vulgar. But Swale is still different, and long may it keep free from the corruption of external influence! As I said, the cottages are delightful, with little leaded windows admitting neither light nor air—but that is a detail; they are most pleasing to the fair sketcher; honeysuckle and roses climb about the doorway, many of the roofs are thatched, and the whole appearance is exquisitely dilapidated.

One landlord, in a thoughtless moment, decided to pull down those on his own estate, and erect new ones with sanitary conveniences, and all kinds of modern improvements; but an indignation meeting was held, and a deputation of ladies called upon him to protest against the desecration. Being quite a plebeian creature, the only person in Swale history whose breeding was not irreproachable, he would not listen to their arguments on abstract beauty, and they did not even convince him by showing that he would utterly ruin the type of good honest English peasant. They appealed to his patriotism: the English countryman was the backbone of the British Army, and how could he be expected to retain his native candour, his obedience and deference to his betters, if he were

born and bred, not in a picturesque old cottage covered with honeysuckle, but in a new-fangled place with a bath-room? But fortunately, Mr. SIMPSON, the owner of the estate in question, was called to a world where it is to be hoped horrid Radicals are in the minority, and his daughters were comparatively innocuous. The poor of Swale were left in peace and quietness, to their own content, for they looked upon it as somehow a merciful dispensation of Providence that every Winter their children should die of diphtheria, or typhoid. For many centuries they had been used to look upon themselves as different beings from the gentry, and they were not going to begin now to give themselves airs. The gentry were the gentry: they were only common people whose part in life it was to minister to their betters' needs, and there was an end of it. It must be said that the richer inhabitants of Swale behaved very well in any calamity. They showered jellies and port-wine and coals upon the indigent, and read the Bible to them for hours.

Now, when the old Vicar of Swale departed the life which he had thoroughly enjoyed for hard upon eighty years, there was much perturbation in the parish over the choice of his successor.

"We don't want somebody too strenuous," said Lady PROUDFOOT, the widow of Sir GEORGE PROUDFOOT, who had been given his K.C.B. after bungling some important affair in the Colonies.

Mrs. STRONG was taking a cup of tea with Lady PROUDFOOT, while the latter's daughters were playing tennis. Mrs. STRONG, having arrived perilously near the age of forty, had given up violent exercise; she thought it ugly enough for a young girl to get red in the face, but for a woman of her years, unpardonable. Besides, she did not take heat becomingly. In her youth Mrs. STRONG had been rather overpowering. Her six feet of height and her generally massive proportions made her seem almost mountainous, and when she gambolled, she reminded one of a young elephant. But years had brought their chastening influence. She was still massive, but the effect now was magnificent. She was sedate, admirably self-possessed, a type of the British matron. The literary young ladies of Swale said she reminded them of BOADICEA. She was undoubtedly a very fine woman, with well-cut features and clear steady eyes. The only fault to be found with her was that though her teeth were obviously perfect, she need not have shown them quite so much; but as she was a very good-natured creature, with an

uncommon sense of humour, her constant smiles may have been due to a cause other than vanity.

"Of course," said Lady PROUDFOOT, "there are so many different sorts of clergymen."

"Yes," replied Mrs. STRONG, smiling, "there are the parsons who are Christians, the parsons who are gentlemen, and the parsons who are neither."

"Well, the chief thing is that he should be a gentleman," said Lady PROUDFOOT. "If he's been to Oxford and taken his degree he'll be quite Christian enough for us."

"It would certainly be terrible if we had an eager little man with a wife and a red nose."

"To say nothing of fifteen children, my dear," cried Lady PROUDFOOT. "And the wives that those sort of clergymen choose are too impossible; Heaven only knows where they find them! No, the fact is, EDITH, that if we have a horrid creature who wants to reform everything, it will simply be the ruin of Swale. We get along very well as we are, and I'm certain that no one could find anything seriously wrong with us."

"We go to church regularly in the newest of bonnets," interrupted Mrs. STRONG, "and when we call ourselves miserable sinners we know it's merely a *façon de parler*."

"If we have a Vicar who wants to have Mothers' Meetings and Bands of Hope and all that rubbish, I really don't know what will become of us."

"Yes," replied Mrs. STRONG, with a drawl which might have been sarcastic, "as long as he can play tennis and behave decently at a dinner-party, our souls can take care of themselves."

"Well, the living's worth six hundred a year and the house is in excellent condition, so I really think we ought to get some one nice."

Lady PROUDFOOT, and the inhabitants of Swale in general, had every reason to be pleased with the Bishop's choice. The Rev. ROBERT BRANSCOMBE was evidently a gentleman—he was, indeed, second cousin to a peer, which necessarily inspired his parishioners with confidence. He was a bachelor, and forty years of age, tall, good-looking, with a fine presence. In ten years his presence would perhaps be a little too fine, already he gave signs of future corpulence; but at the period of which I write it was most striking. He was clean-shaven, and dressed in the latest clerical fashion. I need only add that he was high church, as befitted so respectable a place as Swale, and had charming manners. He talked a great deal, in a loud voice and in a slightly magisterial manner. His conversation was easy, and could be understood by a child. The latest novel, the local rose-show, dances and dinner-parties, formed sufficient ground for the display of his powers. He rarely spoke of parish matters, considering it bad form to talk shop. Finally, he had a passion for TENNYSON, which in a person of his cloth is a proof of much candour and purity of soul. The ladies pronounced him charming, and when an unsympathetic man suggested that his conceit was phenomenal, waxed mighty wroth in the Vicar's defence.

"What I like in him," said Lady PROUDFOOT, "is that except for the clothes he wears, you'd never think he was a clergyman."

It was obvious that the Vicar of Swale ought to marry, and during the two years of his incumbency, the parishioners had done nothing but concoct schemes to that end. Mr. BRANSCOMBE was to the tips of his fingers a marrying man. But the choice in Swale was limited, and lay, in fact, between Mrs. STRONG and JANE SIMPSON. The latter was the eldest daughter of the horrid Radical whom death only had prevented from disfiguring the landscape in the manner I have related. She was a rather homely young woman of nine and twenty, and harmless enough to have gained the sufferance of the other inhabitants of Swale, though they could not be expected to forget that her father had made his money in the city. Her matrimonial desires were obvious, and Lady PROUDFOOT was disgusted at the way in which she behaved with Mr.

BRANSCOMBE. Of course she did nothing indecorous—she was the quietest and most modest of young persons—but she turned pale at his approach, and blushed at every word he said to her. She was evidently dying of love, and every one knew that he need only ask to be accorded her hand and fortune, which was at least one hundred thousand pounds in solid securities.

But the match was looked upon with disfavour, and his parishioners found much comfort in the thought that Mr. BRANSCOMBE was not mercenary. Yet though he would not marry JANE SIMPSON for her money, he was, after all, only human, and could not be expected to remain insensible to her evident adoration. The hopes of the ladies of Swale were centred entirely upon Mrs. STRONG, whom the Fates had not favoured only in looks. Mrs. STRONG was not only handsome, but a widow with fifteen hundred a year as well. Her age, appearance, and station made her appear designed by higher powers to share with Mr. BRANSCOMBE this life of woe. She was a fascinating woman, and the Vicar harboured for her the sincerest admiration. The matter would doubtless have been settled in the first year of his residence at Swale, if Miss SIMPSON, by her sighs and blushes, had not a little disconcerted him. He was really a kind man, and did not wish to break the poor thing's heart. And the attitude of Mrs. STRONG was a little embarrassing. She smiled at him, asked him to dinner, and callers found him constantly taking a cup of tea with her. She seemed to think it quite natural that amiable hostesses at luncheon parties should always pair them off together. The difficulty was that Mrs. STRONG was equally amiable with every one she met, and though she evidently liked the Vicar of Swale, she had given no particular signs of desiring him to be her husband. The Reverend ROBERT BRANSCOMBE had too much dignity and too fine a presence to undergo the humiliation of a refusal—so he hesitated. Of course the ladies of Swale saw how things were, and they did everything to help him—but still he hesitated.

"Upon my word," said Lady PROUDFOOT, "I don't know what more encouragement he can want. He can't expect EDITH to propose to him herself."

Lady PROUDFOOT, more than any one else in Swale, was concerned with the matrimonial affairs of ROBERT BRANSCOMBE. She was of opinion that it was as improper for a clergyman to be unmarried as for a doctor, and besides that, Mrs. STRONG was her bosom friend. She knew very well in what state of mind the Vicar was, and decided at length to speak with Mrs. STRONG on the subject. One day she attacked her by leading the conversation to JANE SIMPSON.

"I really don't see why she shouldn't marry Mr. BRANSCOMBE if she wants to, poor thing," said Mrs. STRONG. "She's a nice quiet girl, and she'd make an admirable wife for a clergyman."

"My dear EDITH," rejoined Lady PROUDFOOT, "I think it would be most disagreeable for all of us. You know she's inclined to be frightfully religious already."

"Oh, six months of marriage with the Vicar would quite cure her of that."

"Besides, I don't think she's the sort of wife for Mr. BRANSCOMBE. He likes to have everything so nice, and she's terribly homely. I noticed last time I called there that she—that she wore knitted stockings, my dear."

Mrs. STRONG laughed, showing her beautiful teeth. "I daresay the poor girl's circulation is bad and she has cold feet."

"I have no patience with you, EDITH," said Lady PROUDFOOT, abruptly coming to the point. "Can't you see that he wants to marry you?"

Mrs. STRONG was not at all disconcerted. "He has never said so."

"I wish you would make up your mind. I think it's absurd for a woman like you, without any encumbrances, to remain unmarried." Mrs. STRONG made no answer, and Lady PROUDFOOT added, "I wonder if you'd accept him if he proposed?"

"Has he commissioned you to find out?"

"Not directly," said Lady PROUDFOOT; "I know he thinks you very charming."

"I'm afraid I don't think him very courageous."

"That sounds like encouragement."

"It does a little," agreed Mrs. STRONG, smiling.

Lady PROUDFOOT rose to go, and kissed her friend.

"I daresay he'll come and see you to-morrow," she added.

Mrs. STRONG was not particularly anxious to get married. The Vicar of Swale was rather a pleasant man, and it was flattering to know that he wished to make her his wife. She wondered that he had not already become engaged to JANE SIMPSON. Anyhow, he might come; she had committed herself to nothing, and would listen to what he had to say.

Next day at three o'clock the Rev. ROBERT BRANSCOMBE was shown into her boudoir. Mrs. STRONG received him with her usual easy amiability, and his self-assurance did not desert him.

There was nothing in their behaviour to show that either was love-sick; so far as concerned the man, his presence was the only sign that Lady PROUDFOOT had delivered any message. His confidence slightly irritated Mrs. STRONG. She wished he were a little less at ease. She offered him some tea, which he refused.

"Of course," she thought, "he has too much humour to be sentimental with a cup of tea in his hand."

Meanwhile Mr. BRANSCOMBE talked of the weather.

"It really is very hot," he said. "Everything in the Vicarage garden is quite parched. You've not seen it since I altered the path on the West side, have you?"

Mrs. STRONG divined at once that he was leading the conversation to the Vicarage in order to suggest that she should become its mistress. She took a malicious pleasure in veering away. Mr. BRANSCOMBE was very self-assured, and she felt it her duty to show him it was not so easy as he thought to win such a charming woman as herself.

"Oh, yes," she replied. "Miss SIMPSON told me you'd been making alterations. I see they're rebuilding the lodge at Manor House." She plunged into a description of the operations.

But Mr. BRANSCOMBE did not lose his self-possession. He conversed fluently of the lodge at Manor House.

"It's a charming old place," he said, when the conversation of itself gave him the opportunity. "But of course I like nothing better than my own Vicarage."

He had brought his own house up again. Mrs. STRONG commented upon the unoriginality of man; but with a beautiful smile, like a hare doubling, broke into an account of a delightful Vicarage she had taken one Summer at Blackstable. It was rather exciting to see Mr. BRANSCOMBE driving steadily to one point, while she did her best to keep away from it. But at last she was cornered.

"Are you fond of Vicarages?" he asked.

The question was inane, but required an answer.

"Passably."

"How do you like mine?" he asked.

Such an inquiry insisted on a civil answer. "Of course it's charming." It amused her to know herself caught.

"It would be ten times more charming if—if you adorned it." He was distinctly clumsy. Mrs. STRONG expected better things of clerical gentlemen of forty.

"Would you put me in a niche in the wall like an Italian saint?"

"You wilfully misunderstand me," he replied with a gently patronising smile.

"I'm so sorry," she murmured.

He looked at her for one moment, and Mrs. STRONG thought that his appearance was too impressive for any one less than an Archdeacon.

"Lady PROUDFOOT sent for me yesterday," he said. "And—she told me I might call upon you."

"I didn't know you required permission to do that," she said with her frank smile, looking steadily at him without the least embarrassment. He was not embarrassed either. He smiled back upon her benignly.

"Will you share my Vicarage with me, Mrs. STRONG?"

He had evidently made up his mind beforehand how to express himself, and he could not allow the accidents of social chatter to disturb his ordered course. "I've come here to-day," he added, raising his voice a little and speaking with the same solemnity as he used in church on Sundays—"I have come here to-day to ask you to become my wife."

Mrs. STRONG looked down. After what Lady PROUDFOOT had told him it would be ridiculous to seem surprised. She was not certain that so matter-of-fact a proposal pleased her. Notwithstanding her massive proportions, she had a certain tenderness for sentiment, and she would have liked him to hesitate bashfully. A spark of poetry would not have been out of place, nor even some indication of suppressed passion. His certainty of success in the suit was irritating. She felt inclined to refuse him to see how he would take it.

"I feel very much flattered, Mr. BRANSCOMBE," she said slowly, to gain time.

"I feel very much flattered, Mr. BRANSCOMBE," she said slowly, to gain time.

"Won't you call me ROBERT?" he said, patting her hand.

Mrs. STRONG looked up quickly, and bending over, the clergyman kissed her on the cheek.

"I thank you with all my heart," he said. "I will endeavour to perform my duty to you as a Christian husband."

Mrs. STRONG was surprised. He evidently was under the impression that she had accepted him, and she was still considering whether she should or not. Surely when you tell a man that his offer flatters you, it is not equivalent to an acceptance? But there was no doubt in Mr. BRANSCOMBE's mind. He even asked her to name the day upon which he would become the happiest of men. He vowed he must immediately impart the good news to Lady PROUDFOOT.

"What an excitement it will cause in the parish," he said, laughing. When he was going away he urged her again to fix a day for the ceremony.



"I wonder," said Mrs. Strong, "how he'll get out of it?"



"Till then," he said, "you will find me a most impatient man."

"It's nice of you to be so eager," she said, showing her beautiful teeth. "But you know there are no end of legal things which will want settling." It seemed as if she had definitely surrendered.

"If there is anything I can do to help you," he replied gallantly, "command me."

"How kind you are! You know I have an income of fifteen hundred a year."

"My dear EDITH!" He waved his hand in deprecation. He was not the man to listen to gross monetary details.

"I think it right to tell you at once," she said, in answer to his gesture. "My income—is contingent on my widowhood."

"I beg your pardon?" he said.

She smiled. "It ceases on my marrying again."

She watched him closely as she made the statement. Mr. BRANSCOMBE started; but his discomposure was momentary.

"My dear EDITH," he said, "you will be more precious to me with the thought that I alone am providing for you. If I have hesitated to ask you to become my wife, it was because your greater income might have—cast suspicion on the purity of my motives."

He kissed her gravely on the forehead and went away.

"I wonder," said Mrs. STRONG, "how he'll get out of it?"

Next day Mr. BRANSCOMBE came to luncheon. He advanced to Mrs. STRONG solemnly and kissed her forehead. He was not a very ardent lover.

"Did you pass a good night?" he asked.

"Oh, yes," she replied, smiling. "I always do."

"Ah!" He paused, and then with a slight effort broke into ecstasies with the view from Mrs. STRONG's windows.

"I can never be sufficiently grateful to you for abandoning all this for my humble Vicarage."

"I'm not cynical," said Mrs. STRONG. "I believe in love in a cottage."

"Ah, well, it has its disadvantages."

Mrs. STRONG had never realised before that her fiancé's conversation was sometimes painfully obvious. They went in to luncheon, and the presence of the butler confined them to commonplaces. But Mrs. STRONG was in high spirits. She saw that Mr. BRANSCOMBE was somewhat embarrassed. She had never seen him in such a condition before, and it delighted her.

"You know," he said, when they returned to the drawing-room, "life will be very different for you as *châtelaine* of Swale Vicarage. I'm afraid we shall not be able to afford a carriage."

"Oh, a pony-cart fulfils all my aspirations."

"What a charming character you have," he said.

He was becoming more and more ill at ease. Mrs. STRONG's humorous eyes were upon him, and he was afraid of looking foolish. He made an effort to be gallant.

"I've never seen any one with such beautiful hair as you have," he said.

She laughed, and he felt his remark absurd.

"Have you told Lady PROUDFOOT of our engagement?" she asked.

At last he positively blushed. "No. On second thoughts I fancied I had better not. After all, it's no business of hers. And besides, the date of our marriage is so very uncertain, isn't it?" Mrs. STRONG had the charity not to look at him. But he took his courage in both hands. "I won't conceal from you that what you told me yesterday has made some alteration in the matter—not in my feelings, of course; your poverty can only make my love the greater."

Now Mrs. STRONG looked at him, and he faltered. She at least had seen the Reverend ROBERT BRANSCOMBE lose his self-assurance.

"Of course," he said, "I know my behaviour is liable to misconstruction. It looks as if—as if I were mercenary."

Yesterday I asked you to marry me as quickly as possible. I know it sounds funny when I ask you to-day to wait."

"Oh, not at all," said Mrs. STRONG, encouragingly.

He took her hands, but Mrs. STRONG gently withdrew them. He was talking very quickly, nervously.

"I feel," he said, "that my duty to you counterbalances everything. I hope you understand that it's entirely for your sake that I want you to wait."

"Oh, you want me to wait?"

"In three or four years all sorts of things may happen. I have a good deal of influence in clerical quarters, and I have been given to understand that I'm my Uncle GEORGE'S sole heir. Of course he's only sixty-five. He may live another ten years; but even then I should only be fifty." He took her hand again. "I know I'm asking a great deal; but will you wait for me, EDITH, say, five years? I'm certain to get a better living by then."

"Are you sure," she asked quietly, "that you wouldn't prefer not to be bound by an engagement? As you suggest, so much may happen in five years."

"Oh, EDITH, surely you have not so poor an opinion of me as to suppose me capable of breaking off our engagement because—because—"

"You know, ROBERT, you are a young man, and in ten years you'll only be fifty; but I shall be fifty, too! And you have a great future before you. I'm sure you'll end up as a bishop. A man of your calibre is wasted on a little country parish. I don't feel myself justified in hampering you."

"I should be contemptible if I asked you to give me back my word." The Vicar of Swale was genuinely disturbed; he was a gentleman, and he could not stoop to a discreditable action.

"But it is I who ask you, ROBERT. I do not feel myself justified in standing in your way. It is no sacrifice to me when I think of your future."

"I can't accept your sacrifice," he said solemnly. "I should feel such a—such a cad."

"Nonsense," said Mrs. STRONG, changing her tone. "We will forget our interview of yesterday. You may be quite certain that I will say nothing about it."

"Ah, Mrs. STRONG, you are a truly Christian woman."

The Vicar of Swale was humbled, but Mrs. STRONG was a woman, and she could not let him go without a small revenge.

"I hope," she murmured with a smile, as she shook his hand,

"I hope I haven't made you feel very ridiculous? I really haven't tried to."

Next morning Lady PROUDFOOT rushed into Mrs. STRONG's drawing-room.

"Oh, EDITH, what have you done?"

"Good Heavens! what's the matter?"

"I've just had a letter from Mr. BRANSCOMBE, and he tells me—"

"What?" Surely the Vicar of Swale had not betrayed their secret.

"He tells me that he's engaged to JANE SIMPSON."

Mrs. STRONG did not move a muscle.

"Oh, is that all?" she said. "I knew he meant to propose to her. He came to see me two days ago, and I told him she'd make a pattern wife."

"But he wanted to propose to you."

"Oh, dear no. You're completely mistaken," she replied, calmly. "He thinks I'm really too low church."

She smiled her most fascinating smile.

"You certainly have got beautiful teeth," said Lady PROUDFOOT, rather sourly.

*W. Somerset Maugham*

Next week, "Ormsby St. John's Heir," by Major A. GRIFFITHS.